

Grievance Policy and Procedure



ROVEG FRUIT B.V.
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Policy details

What does this policy cover and who is covered?

Roveg Fruit B.V (Roveg) endeavours to ensure that its employees and stakeholders are happy working for/with Roveg. An important part of that commitment includes putting in place a policy to ensure that Roveg promptly, fairly and consistently addresses any complaints, concerns, and problems relating to the plaintiff's issues via the Grievance Committee.

This policy is not part of employment contracts nor commercial contracts. Roveg may amend this policy at any time.

This policy applies to both internal and external stakeholders, including workers, members, staff, buyers, suppliers, indigenous peoples and communities.

The plaintiff's right to be accompanied at grievance meetings

During any meeting that takes place under this policy, the plaintiff may bring someone with the plaintiff (normally referred to as a companion). That person is generally a colleague, a work colleague, or, if appropriate, a trade union representative, or other parties that have witnessed the issue.

The Grievance Committee will remind the plaintiff of this entitlement when it sends the plaintiff a meeting invite. The plaintiff must then let the Grievance Committee know if the plaintiff intend to invite someone to accompany the plaintiff and who that person is, as well as their relationship to the plaintiff. The plaintiff will be responsible for them attending the meeting, including making (if necessary), any travel arrangements and costs.

The plaintiff is entirely free to choose a work colleague to be accompanied by during the meeting. If the plaintiff does choose a work colleague, please be aware that, on occasion, there may be a need to adjust scheduled meeting timings to ensure the plaintiff's colleague's attendance (and absence from their usual work duties) does not cause any operational challenges.

Speaking on the plaintiff's behalf

If the plaintiff would prefer them to do so, the plaintiff's companion may present the key points of the grievance and may also speak openly on the plaintiff's behalf at the meeting. The plaintiff should feel free to seek their companions opinions and confer with said person. During the meeting both people are entitled to leave the room for a reasonable period of time to do so.

The plaintiff's companion is not permitted, however, to answer questions put directly to the plaintiff or try to prevent the company asking the plaintiff questions or outlining its views.

Confidentiality

Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner that is respectful to both the complainant and the respondent. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect personal information from loss, unauthorised access, use, disclosure or any other misuse during the complaint handling process. However, the committee cannot give an assurance of absolute confidentiality, given statutory obligations and principles of natural justice.

Procedure for raising a grievance

Please follow this procedure. It is designed to ensure fair and efficient handling of any complaint or concern raised by Roveg's employees.

Before formal action is taken:

If the plaintiff has a concern, the Grievance Committee strongly encourages the plaintiff to approach the Grievance Committee if the plaintiff is concerned or unhappy about any problems or issues with Roveg operations. The Grievance Committee believes that an informal discussion can often be the most effective and rapid mean to resolve most concerns that employees/stakeholders raise. The Grievance Committee understands that they are expected to help address any concerns in line with its policies and its business values. If this discussion is not successful in resolving the plaintiff's concern, the plaintiff must follow the procedure below.

Stage 1: formal grievance action – reporting and gathering the facts

- Provide written details of the plaintiff's complaint to the Grievance Committee through the Grievance channel or directly to the workers representative. Make sure that the complaint includes:
 1. What was not conformant with the norm.
 2. The names of any individuals/ business entities involved.
 3. The history and any relevant dates (at least approximate ones) relating to all of the facts the plaintiff describes.
 4. Any materials (correspondence, screenshots of communications, etc.) that help to support what the plaintiff has described.
 5. What steps the plaintiff has already taken to resolve the concern(s) raised.
 6. What action the plaintiff wants Roveg to take in response to the plaintiff's complaint, and what outcome the plaintiff would like to see happen. For example, the plaintiff might request that a particular policy, procedure, practice or set-up within its business is changed; or perhaps that a warning be issued to a particular individual/business entity to whom the plaintiff's complaint might relate.
- The plaintiff should also clearly state within this written document that the plaintiff intends for it to be handled under Roveg's formal grievance procedure.
- The Grievance Committee will acknowledge receipt of the plaintiff's grievance (in writing within 3 days) and tell the plaintiff how we intend to deal with it, the precise nature of which may depend on what the plaintiff has told the Grievance Committee.
- The Grievance Committee will thoroughly examine all relevant facts and materials available and the plaintiff will be required to cooperate with the Grievance Committee so that we can ensure a fair and thorough investigation into the issue(s) the plaintiff has raised. As soon as this investigation is completed, the plaintiff may be asked to attend a formal interview and to produce a formal statement about the matter. The Grievance Committee may also ask other people to attend interviews and/or provide statements too.
- The Grievance Committee will do its best to give the plaintiff a timeframe of how long the investigations may take, if they cannot be completed within 7 days.

Stage 2: formal grievance action – the grievance meeting(s)

- If the complaint is not anonymous a formal meeting might be held and the plaintiff invited to attend it. At this meeting, the plaintiff will be asked to explain the plaintiff's concern(s) and how they think the matters should be resolved. It is an important part of its formal grievance process.
- The meeting will usually take place within 5 working days of the plaintiff lodging the their grievance. The Grievance Committee asks that the plaintiff to make every effort to attend it. If the plaintiff is unable to attend, the committee will make all reasonable efforts to reschedule the meeting to an alternative time that the plaintiff is able to make.
- If the plaintiff wishes to do so, the plaintiff may bring someone with the plaintiff to the meeting. The plaintiff is free to determine who that person might be. Ordinarily, it will be a work colleague or a relevant trade union representative, for example, as the plaintiff prefers. (See Part I, paragraph 4 – “Speaking on the plaintiff’s behalf”)
- The Grievance Committee will not record this meeting without the plaintiff’s knowledge. Please do not record the meeting without the committee’s knowledge and consent. If at any time, the plaintiff has concerns about its grievance process or the individual(s) leading it on its behalf, the plaintiff should tell the Grievance Committee promptly and openly, so that the committee can address the plaintiff’s concerns.
- Once the above meeting has been held, often more time is needed to further investigate the matters discussed. If the complaint is anonymous the Grievance committee will launch an investigation after the complaint has been received.

Stage 3: formal grievance action – Investigation

- The Grievance Committee team will investigate the allegation. This investigation can be done together with a dedicated team of responsible certification staff, if it involves suppliers and local communities. Working with a dedicated team allows for bundling of information from a region, a country, a product or a supply chain. A regular exchange allows to further foster learning and improve analysis and investigation methods.
- Based on the type, severity and context of the allegation (political unrest, pandemic,...), appropriate investigation measures will be determined. These include:
 1. Analysis of the written evidence provided by the alleging party.
 2. Request for an evaluation of the allegation by a third party (e.g. technical expert opinion, legal statement).
 3. Request for a statement and/or objective evidence from the concerned customer.
 4. Analysis of existing audit reports.
 5. Analysis of the allegation as part of an on-site audit (announced or unannounced) at the concerned stakeholder.
 6. Analysis of the allegation as part of a remote investigation using live interaction (via Skype, phone call, chat) with the alleging party, concerned customer or third party.
- Roveg will evaluate all facts gathered during the investigation against all the relevant standards of which Roveg is a member, Roveg policies and if applicable, other contractual obligations.
- To ensure confidentiality and reliability in results, information on the methodology and date of investigation will not be shared during ongoing investigations.
- If the concerned person/business entity was found to be compliant with Roveg’s policies, United Nations

Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights, and relevant standards, depending on the complaint subject the allegation will be dismissed.

- If the allegation was substantiated, and the concerned person/business entity was found to be in non-compliance with Roveg's policies, United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights, and relevant standards, depending on the complaint subject, Roveg will issue a non-conformity and the regular the request for corrective measure or, if applicable, the appropriate sanctions (e.g. suspension, termination of contract)
- If the allegation was substantiated and the concerned person/business entity was found to be in breach of the contract or applicable policies, Roveg may proceed to cancel the contract in place with said person/business entity.
- It is not generally permitted for the person doing a complaint to participate in these activities. But the Grievance Committee will keep the person informed of the progress, if the complaint is not anonymous. and made well ask for more

Stage 4 : formal grievance action – Roveg's decision

- If the complaint is anonymous, within a week of the final findings Roveg will provide a written decision, available in the grievance platform outlining the conclusions and how the company has have decided to address grievance.
- If the complaint is not anonymous, Roveg will within a week of the final findings provide the plaintiff with a written decision, outlining its conclusions and how we have decided to address the plaintiff's grievance.

Stage 5: formal grievance action – the plaintiff's right to appeal

- If the plaintiff is not in agreement with Roveg decision, the plaintiff is entitled to appeal it. The plaintiff must do so in writing within one week of receiving its decision.
- The plaintiff appeal must be set out in writing and:
 - Addressed to the Grievance Committee for an appeal in its written decision
 - Clearly set out why the plaintiff is appealing against its decision
 - Provide any new information or evidence on which the plaintiff wish to rely since its earlier investigations were completed

Stage 6: formal grievance action – the appeal hearing

- Usually within two weeks of the plaintiff notifying the Grievance Committee of the plaintiff's appeal, the Grievance Committee will invite the plaintiff to attend a further meeting with the committee. Wherever possible, the person who held the original grievance meeting will not lead this appeal meeting. As before, the plaintiff entitled to ask someone to accompany the plaintiff .

Stage 7: formal grievance action – Roveg's final decision

- Following this meeting, we will provide the plaintiff with its written, final decision, or in case the complaint is anonymous provide the results of the grievance procedure on Roveg's grievance platform. The Grievance Committee aims, wherever possible, for this decision to be made within two weeks of the appeal hearing.